United Nations ECE/CES/2018/14/Add.2

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
26 March 2018

English only

Economic Commission for Europe

Conference of European Statisticians
Sixty-sixth plenary session
Geneva, 18-20 June 2018
Item 9 (a) of the provisional agenda
Reports on the work of the Conference of European Statisticians, its Bureau and Teams of Specialists

Implementation of the UNECE Statistical Programme 2017

Addendum

Report of the Workshop on Statistical Data Dissemination and Communication

Note by the secretariat

Summary

The document presents the key outcomes of the Workshop on Statistical Data Dissemination and Communication which took place from 28 to 30 June 2017 in Geneva. The report is submitted to the Conference of European Statisticians for information.

GE.18-04673(E)

1804673

Please recycle

I. Attendance

1. The Workshop on Statistical Data Dissemination and Communication was held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 28 to 30 June 2017. It was attended by representatives from the statistical offices of Albania, Argentina, Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, Mongolia, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and the United States of America as well as by representatives from the European Central Bank, the European University Institute, Eurostat, International Labour Organization (ILO), the Nordic Council of Ministers, Nordregio, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo.

II. Organization of the meeting

2. The workshop was opened by a presentation prepared by the UNECE Dissemination and Communication Steering Committee, outlining the results of a survey on data dissemination tools that was conducted in March 2017. The survey gauged the interest of respondents to use and contribute to a repository of data dissemination and communication tools, products, and best practices. According to the survey results, most respondents would be interested in a repository.

3. The workshop consisted of five sessions and covered the following substantive topics:

- Session 1: Strategic communication planning;
- Session 2: Data visualisations;
- Session 3: Measuring success and impact of communication programmes;
- Session 4: New ways with new(s) media;
- Session 5: Visions in data dissemination.

4. Each session consisted of presentations and concluded with small group discussions about the main lessons learned and suggested topics for future work. The outcomes of these discussions are documented in Summary of discussions. An extra presentation on the European Statistics Olympics was given by Maria J. Vinuesa (INE, Spain) on the second day. At the end of the workshop a voting round was organized to identify the most relevant topics for future work. Ms Ellen Dougherty acted as chair of the workshop.

5. All abstracts, papers and presentations from the workshop are available at https://statswiki.unece.org/x/LQWcBw.

6. Key items identified for future work included:

- Share statistical campaigns, including problems, challenges, and failures;
- Develop guidance on how to measure the success and impact of communication;
- Develop guidance on how to create a stronger, more trustworthy brand and rebuild and strengthen trust in official statistics;
- Develop guidance on how to respond to "alternative facts" or misuse of official statistics;

- Develop guidance on how to make simpler, more portable tools and create partnerships, e.g. with media, to increase their use;
- Share experience in producing videos and other visualisations (including how to recreate them).

III. Summary of the discussion and main conclusions reached at the meeting

A. Session 1: Strategic communication planning

7. The session was organized by Ulla Agerskov (Nordic Council of Ministers) and included the following presentations:

- Statistics Canada: Telling Canada's story in numbers;
- European Central Bank: Preparing a statistics communication strategy;
- Statistics Finland: CRM at Statistics Finland – platform for stakeholder data and relationship management;
- Eurostat: Pilot dissemination of experimental statistics: strategic communication issues;
- Bank of Portugal: Making sense of central bank data – The Banco de Portugal's experience in communicating statistics.

8. The following points were raised in the small group discussions as lessons learned and suggestions for future work:

- The "official statistics" label no longer automatically leads to increased use of statistics and data. To be successful, NSOs must develop a communications strategy at the same time as they develop the statistical programme. Communication should be part of the statistical process from the beginning;
- It is important to include a social media strategy in the dissemination strategy;
- NSOs need to be proactive in rebuilding trust in official statistics. This includes working to educate people to consume media critically, developing guidance on how to create a stronger brand and how to rebuild trust in official statistics, and sharing experiences on how to manage fake news and the use of "alternative facts";
- The importance of communication should be understood by everybody in the statistical organization. Working more with multidisciplinary teams can help develop more efficient communication methods;
- In times of uncertainty, people expect more than just numbers, they expect analysis and context. Therefore, NSOs should move from just disseminating products to providing services, as well;
- Share experiences and results on recognizing "non-statistical" opportunities to introduce statistics into conversation;
- Share examples of successful statistical campaigns and what doesn't work.

B. Session 2: Data visualisations

9. The session was organized by Gabrielle Beaudoin (Statistics Canada) and included the following presentations:

- OECD: Shedding light on people's perceptions of income inequality in an innovative way;
- Eurostat: Sharing: a solution to digital challenges;
- European Central Bank: Visualizations – an integrated part of the digital communication strategy;
- Statistics Lithuania: GIS – new possibilities for enhancing the usability of statistics;
- Nordregio: NordMap – web-mapping tool for the Nordic Region.

10. The following points were raised in the small group discussions as lessons learned and suggestions for future work:

- Visualisations that work in a simple, intuitive way are powerful. They should be shareable and usable by others;
- Tell stories and create narratives with the data. Use examples from daily life to introduce the tools to new audiences. Videos and infographics are good tools to use to reach a broad audience;
- Visualisations should reflect the brand of the NSO and have a unified visual identity;
- Research your developer. Having a good developer can avoid a lot of problems;
- Create a collection of sharable videos explaining specific topics, and share experiences with production of videos;
- Share internal (and external) guidelines for social media and rules of behaviour for staff;
- Demo sessions at Disscomm: how do you actually do x, y, and z?

C. Session 3: Measuring success and impact of communication programs

11. This session was organized by Michael Levi (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics) and included the following presentations:

- Destatis, Germany: Web Search Statistics: Identifying and Satisfying User Needs;
- Eurostat: Measuring success of Eurostat social media activities;
- Statistics Finland: Measurement of communication at Statistics Finland;
- Statistics Sweden: Measuring success in social media and communication activities for non-expert users;
- Statistics Lithuania: Evaluation of Society's Interest in the Official Statistics and Calculation of the Society's Interest Index.

12. The following points were raised in the small group discussions as lessons learned and suggestions for future work:

- It is important to measure the outcome of the communication strategy and spend resources on measurement. Take a project management approach to measurement

and consider all channels when measuring communication. An overview of monitoring tools for communication, in particular social media, would be useful;

- React to the results of monitoring and measurement quickly to meet changing user needs. People may suffer from information overload and may find it difficult to find relevant content on webpages. Therefore, it is important to listen to user feedback;
- Develop Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the website. They can tell the full story if you know how to use them. More guidance is needed on how to identify meaningful KPIs and how to use the results to make concrete improvements;
- Relative measures may be more meaningful than absolute ones;
- It is important to also target communications to specific groups such as journalists, students, etc. Not only must the story be tailored to needs, also the correct technology and products need to be used;
- Creating focus groups with interns is a good way to learn about new social media channels and the needs of younger audiences;
- Develop quality indicators for communication;
- Work at the international level to adopt a standard for defining and communicating experimental statistics. Follow-up on disseminating and communicating experimental data.

D. Session 4: New ways with new(s) media

13. This session was organized by Lukasz Augustyniak (Eurostat) and Kerstin Hänsel (Destatis, Germany) and it included the following presentations:

- Statistics Norway: Making greater impact with an earlier release time;
- Eurostat: Reaching new audiences - The ESS experience on Facebook;
- Statistics South Africa: Innovation in the use of social media by national statistical offices;
- Central Bureau of Statistics, Israel: Israel Statistics in the New Media world;
- Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia: Media coverage analysis as a tool to measure PR performance;
- Eurostat: What the media asked for...

14. The following points were raised in the small group discussions as lessons learned and suggestions for future work: How much does risk management impact on individual behaviours?

- Social media is not new anymore. Are there any new channels emerging?
- Criticism on social media can sometimes be addressed by other users. More guidance on how to do crisis communication in social media is needed;
- Social media follow their own rules of communication; messages need to be short and easy to understand. Make sure to really get the message across in social media. Use different channels for different messages. For example, Twitter is more professional, whereas Facebook is more for entertainment. Instragram works for infographs;
- Add humour (but be careful) in communication;

- Be responsive on social media, but remember that quick responses can raise expectations.

E. Session 5: Visions in data dissemination

15. This session was organized by Terri Mitton (OECD) and included the following presentations:

- United States Bureau of Labor Statistics: Imagining next-generation statistical news releases;
- European University Institute: Integrating Data Collections with Open Data Resources: a communication-centred approach;
- National Bank of Georgia: Making data transparent and accessible;
- United States Department of Agriculture: Disseminating Government Data Effectively in the Age of Open Data;
- International Labour Organization: Improving User Experience through Simplicity;
- Swiss Statistical Office: Modernisation of digital asset architecture for online dissemination.

16. The following points were raised in the small group discussions as lessons learned and suggestions for future work:

- Prepare ready-made infographs, videos, and visualisations and include those in press releases. Journalists will reuse them in their articles. Aligning with journalist's needs (release times, training) is also important;
- Rethink the style of your press releases. For example, reduce text to bullets, include interactive charts, and integrate social media in news releases;
- Automate as much as possible, but take into account the target group: people don't want to read/waste time looking for data, so create simple presentations of statistics. Guidance is needed on how to do this;
- Share more information on innovative release vehicles and on what services and products users want.